

Farmamerica



Photos Courtesy of Farmamerica.



Have you ever been curious what it might be like to live in an 1850s log cabin? Have you wandered through an old-time blacksmith shop, smelling the hot metal of freshly formed horseshoes? You can see all this and much more at a visit to Farmamerica. That's the Minnesota Agricultural Interpretive Center near Waseca, MN. Farmamerica tells the story of the family farm, the land and the people who worked that land.

Visitors to Farmamerica walk Time Lane Road. It's like a time line. You start at the Settlement Farm and prairie area of mid-1800s and end at a modern farm exhibit. Time Lane Road helps you see changes in farming and understand why those changes took place.

Welcome to the Prairie!

What would you do first if you were a settler arriving on the Minnesota prairie? You'd probably build a house. Prairie families built log houses if they were lucky enough to have trees nearby, but many built sod-covered shacks or "soddies." A cook stove was the most important "store-bought" item. Families often brought stoves with them from the East. After homes came gardens and crops. As the families prospered, they added buildings like barns.

Prairie-Pond-Marsh

Across from the Settlement Farm is an area of water, trees and sod. Oak, maple and other hardwood trees provided pioneers with shelter, shade, wood for building materials and fuel for heat and cooking. Over the years the trees were cut down to make way for more farmland. Today, volunteers have planted more than 7,000 native hardwood trees similar to those that grew there long ago.

1920s-1930s Farmstead

This farm has a simple farm home with a red barn. Lots of dairy farms looked like this back then. The house had a kitchen, pantry, dining room, front parlor and bedroom. Not many farms had indoor bathrooms at this time!

The barn had a hayloft for storing hay. It had a silo—a tall, round storage place—for storing silage. Silage is chopped grains, usually corn or hay, fed to animals. The farm had cows, chickens, pigs and horses. Farmers built more buildings—chicken coops, hog houses, granaries to store extra grain—when they were needed. Tractors came along during this time and greatly changed farming. This farm had something else that was new from 1936 on in the area: electricity. How do you suppose electricity changed things?

Modern Farm Exhibit

This farm house is modern. Buildings include larger bins for storing grain. There is no red barn. Now there's a big utility shed that stores the many machines used on this farm. Many different uses for modern farm products are shown. You also see what farmers are doing today to better protect the environment and make sure our foods are safe to eat.

Moving On

Ready for more? Before you leave Farmamerica, you can visit a country church, blacksmith shop and country schoolhouse. During the warm season, you can join in soapmaking, butter-making, beekeeping, ice cream making and more. What a great way to learn about ag and its changing world!



Ask your teacher to order the new video "Time Travels!" It'll show you 200 years worth of Minnesota Agriculture. **Hey Kids!**

Your family and your class are welcome to visit Farmamerica, just four miles west of U.S. Highway 14 on County Road 2 near Waseca, Minnesota.

Your Teacher's Guide for this AgMag has more information!